1: Kroeber E-5 (1901) 1908
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hand, according as they belonged to one division or the other. Vessels of water were ready to pour on the racers in order to cool them. The four "brothers," the dancers previously separate from the rest at the eastern end of the lodge, did not run with the crowd, but started out slowly together, their faces covered with their robes. They trotted at a slow pace over the same course as the other dancers. As they returned, long after the crowd, the boys, young men, and young women of the camp, had gathered on both sides, and pelted them with buffalo-chips until they reached the dancing-lodge. There is, in this slow following of the pledger and his three companions, a reminiscence of the white-fool, the dancer of highest degree in the Arapaho crazy-lodge, who on all occasions contrasts by his slow movements with the other dancers.[1] After the return of all the dancers, they presented horses loaded with property to their "grandfathers," and these made similar presents to them. These gifts seem to have been payments to the old men for their instruction and painting, and to have been made at the conclusion of the part of the ceremony which was under their control. From this time on, the dancers' wives returned to their tents, and took no further part in the ceremony.

After this followed two observances. It is not certain which of the two came first. A crowd of people were waiting for the dancers in the open. The dancers, wearing their best moccasins put on loosely without being tied, left the lodge; and the waiting people, mostly women and children, ran after them, pulling off their moccasins, and, when they could not succeed in doing so otherwise, seizing their feet, and tripping them as they went. The dancers did not try to escape, or save their moccasins, but allowed them to be taken. Or, again, an old man who was poor was selected, and, having been given a pipe to smoke in order that he might accept, he went to the east of the camp-circle. A buffalo robe was brought, incensed four times with sweet-grass placed on burning charcoal or buffalo-chips, and then placed over the old man, with the hair side out, as, bent over, he knelt on the ground. The dancers gathered about him, and

[1] According to an Arapaho account obtained, somewhat different from those previously utilized, there are two white-fools, not one. It is not clear which information is more correct. The white-fools always follow the dancers. If one of the ordinary dancers should be behind them, he would become unable to move. This is the result of any violation of a rule of the ceremony by a participant. In such cases the white-fools have the power to cure them by taking off their owl-feather head-bands, and rubbing them over the body with them. The white-fools are addressed as heiçâbihin ("sisters-in-law," strictly, "brother or sister-in-law" of opposite sex from the speaker). The dancers, to look at a person, put their head to the ground, and pretend to look with their rump. They throw dung into tents, calling it "food." If people look at them through awl-holes in a tent, they at once shoot the tent in that place. Going out on the prairie, they say, "Let us not shoot into the air," and shoot up. When the arrows fall in plain sight, they cannot find them; if they fall into brush or tall grass, they find them at once. They imitate, often with obscene renderings, anything that they hear, such as a person's speech, or a dog's bark. They paralyze dogs by pointing at them an arrow to which tcetcâttcel is attached. They give the dogs they kill to their "grandfathers" to eat. As soon as they take off their head-bands, they become rational. Mooney's account of the Cheyenne and Arapaho crazy-dance, which seems to refer chiefly to the former, mentions two white-fools; compare Ghost-Dance Religion, op. cit., 1033.

1: Kroeber E-5 (1901) 1908
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in the approach of the buffalo, even if previously there had been none in the vicinity of the camp.

The dancers carried representations of war-spikes or tomahawks, which apparently resembled the buffalo-shaped sticks of the first dance of the Arapaho. The sticks are described as being about as long as women's digging-sticks, and, like them, sharpened at one end. The other end, however, was bent. The stick was painted red, and a quill-embroidered strip of skin was wound around it as a handle. A buffalo-calf's tail and a bunch of buffalo-fetlocks, and no doubt other objects, were also attached. The stick was used as a rattle.

The conclusion of this ceremony presented a feature not found in the two preceding ones. According to one account, the gifts obtained by these dancers were received in payment from the spectators looking in at the lodge. After four days the camp broke, and followed the dancers. On reaching a place where the property had been laid on the ground, the people of the tribe stood in a long row, facing the east. One of the dancers filled a pipe, and selecting one of the poorest men in the camp offered it to him. When the old man took the pipe, the dancer prayed him to allow that all of his company should strike him (count coup on him). A bed of sage was then made for the old man in front of the assembled tribe. Along the edges of this bed, buffalo-chips were laid. The old man crouched on his hands and knees with his head toward the east, and, like the old man undergoing a similar humiliation in the crazy-dance, was covered with a buffalo robe the hair-side of which was turned out. The dancers faced him in a row and danced, rattling. After four songs they ran to the old man, and one after another struck him lightly, each placing beside him a moccasin or some other object, which the old man, on getting up, kept for himself. Then the dancers' "grandfathers" each picked up one of the buffalo-chips from the edges of the sage, and, when they had prepared them, one of the dancers squatted over each. Then his "grandfather," taking him by the shoulders, motioned with him four times, and the fourth time pushed him down. When they had all sat down, each "grandfather" spoke to his "grandson," telling him, "From now on, you need not be afraid to interrupt a sacred performance. You can talk obscenely to a chief, and no one will say anything to you." The people had been watching this performance, which marked the end of the dance.

The Biitaha^{N}w^{U}.

As stated, this dance has been abandoned a long time, and very little information was obtained regarding it. Men are alive who have seen it,

1; Kroeber E-5 (1901) 1908
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171 whitish fur, and dyed horsehair tufts at the ends. At the base of each arm
293 are red, yellow, and violet feathers. These are either cut off across the end,
778 or have the uppermost part of the quill with its attached vanes removed.

CUSTOMS CONNECTED WITH RELIGION.

171 Sacred pipes were important in the religion of the Gros Ventre. The
276 beliefs and practices connected with these differ somewhat from those of
778 the Arapaho. The Arapaho recognize only one sacred pipe, which is pre-eminent over all others. Its worship is entirely tribal, though it is in the keeping of an individual. It occupies much the place in tribal life that the sacred pole did among the Omaha. While there are other sacred objects, such as the wheels and bundles, none of them equal the pipe in the regard in which they are held. Among the Gros Ventre there is an analogue of the Arapaho pipe, but also several others. This multiplicity distinctly differentiates the character of the Gros Ventre pipes from that of the Arapaho. The Gros Ventre pipes are not all primarily connected with the origin of the world; they are in part obtained from other tribes. They thus resemble the inter-tribal peace-pipes of the eastern and northern Plains.

[888] The sacred pipes were kept by old men. Their keepers could retain them as long as they wanted. They transferred their pipe to another keeper or owner whenever they wished, especially if some one prayed on their behalf. At present the Gros Ventre have three pipes. It is said that formerly they had more, some of which have been buried with their last owners. The most sacred of these pipes is called "flat-pipe" (qäčitsa"). This is described as being made of catlinite, with the bowl in the shape of a person (initä"). The Arapaho sacred pipe is also called "flat-pipe," and also is not flat; but it differs from the Gros Ventre pipe in being cylindrical and tubular. About the centre of the stem of this Gros Ventre flat-pipe is tied a string. A person in the tent where the pipe is kept should not tell myths. If through forgetfulness he begins to do so, it is necessary for him to continue all night.

276 A sick man sometimes pledged to smoke one of the sacred pipes for his
755 recovery. Then he provided food, and distinguished warriors were invited.
778 Each of these had to recount four coups before the pipe could be lighted. A green cherry-branch was then taken, greased, and put into the fire to light the pipe with. If it burnt well, the man would recover; if it burnt poorly, they were afraid that he would not become well, or that something would happen. Then the pipe was smoked in the greatest silence. Cloth or calico was "given" to it, the wrapping last given being the one on the out-

2: Flannery E-5 (1940-1948) 1953
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ties of the larger society which the company had joined. Meanwhile another group was meeting informally before it was admitted into one or other of the Societies. Since the Stars and Wolf-men were approximately even in number, there probably was a regular alternation. According to reasonable estimate, the Potbellies joined the Stars about 1840; the next group of young men would then have joined the Wolves, say in 1843 or 1844; the following company joining the Stars in about 1849–50.

If the Sacred Dances, except the Sacrifice Dance, were gone through in order, there would thus be several companies each year whose members were eligible to vow any one of the Dances, and our informants were all under the impression that one or more of the Dances was given each summer. It seems quite clear that the Law Enforcer Dance was vowed only by the older levels of the active warriors. After having gone through this rite, these men more or less retired as "old men," and, having "sat on the sage," acquired certain privileges and freedom denied to their fellow tribesmen who had not yet gone through this Dance. These "old men" acted as ceremonial grandfathers, i.e. sponsors and teachers, for others going through the various lodges, but were no longer active as Stars or Wolf-men. They became members of an undifferentiated group of elders, the ranks of their original company having no doubt been drastically thinned out by the time they would have arrived at this status.

If the above interpretation be correct, there would be three age divisions: the "young men," those meeting in companies; the "middle-aged, mature men," whose companies had joined either the Stars or the Wolf-men, and, having gone through the Fly Dance, were eligible to vow the other Dances; the "old men" who had gone through the Law Enforcer's Dance and were no longer active in the Star and Wolf-men societies, except two of their number, one of whom served as announcer in each.

The young men, who together formed the company, being of approximately the same age, were tied together by bonds of friendship and there were apparently not a few pairs of "inseparable friends" in each company. One of our informants, Cora Chandler, indicated that the bonds holding together the members of a company were so intimate that marriage between their children was

2: Flannery E-5 (1940-1948) 1953
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he should, don't fight back. Let him take it out on you and don't fight back. 183 867

"When you are out playing, if you are hungry and you want to eat, come home. Don't go to any other family to eat because people are fond of their food and might resent it. If a boy, some friend of yours, invites you to his home, don't go."

Garter Snake's father was the one who lectured his children,—three sons and three daughters. Since she was Pipe Child, when her father was Keeper of the Feathered Pipe, Garter Snake was talked to by him more often perhaps than were her siblings. Long after she was married, her mother used to remind her of the things her father told her. Some of these admonitions were as follows: "I want you to be an upright, honest and straight woman. If you listen to everything I tell you and do as I tell you, in the future you will thank me for it. Now don't think you are alone in this world because the One above the White Man sees everything that we do. Don't steal, don't lie, don't be tricky. Be honest about everything.

"When you grow up and finally have your own home, pity the old men and pity the old women, pity the poor. If you see an old woman with a ragged dress, give her a blanket. Make moccasins for these old women. The same holds for these old men. If you see an old man whose leggings are torn, make leggings for him. If you see a poor person who needs clothes, give him some if you have any. If you do that the One Above who watches and looks at you doing those things, He is going to reward you. [888]

"When you are married and have your own home, take care of it well. If you have horses, take care of them; try to have good property and take care of it. If you do that you will always have something. If you have horses of your own that will help your husband. He may not have any and you can help him along.

"Be good to everybody. If a man or woman comes to visit, welcome them. Tell them: 'Come in and sit down.' Then feed them well regardless of whether they are poor or rich, young or old, or even children. [574]

"Above all, don't you ever quarrel with anyone. Don't you ever fight. Try to be friendly with everybody." [865]

Charles Buckman's uncle, who, like Garter Snake's father,

183 867 was not a Christian, used to tell him: "You have eyes to see, a heart to think, and ears to hear. Listen to what I will tell you. You are a poor boy. As such, be faithful. Believe in the One Above the White Man. Pray to Him, ask Him to have pity on you and so make you a good man some day. Try to be good to all, especially when you become a man. Be good to the poor, be good to the old. Never take anything not belonging to you. Never [865] speak evil of other people. Try to be patient. If a man says anything wrong to you, and hurts your feelings, say nothing because if folks talk back it causes quarreling or fighting, which is not good. If a poor man asks you for anything, if you have it, be ready to hand it over to him. If you see anybody hungry and [888] you have it, feed him. If an old man or woman is in need and wants anything done, do it for him or her. If you do these things, the One Above will have pity on you."

685 867 183 All informants agreed that in addition to having been told to take care of whatever property they might have, they were instructed to regard the property rights of others. It was believed that, though the theft remained undiscovered, the thief would be punished by automatic supernatural sanction. "Something terrible would happen to anybody who stole something." Mary's grandmother, for instance, had told her time and again never to take anything that did not belong to her. To illustrate how well this had been instilled into her, she gave the following example. "On one occasion when I was a child, I found a really beautiful string of beads, but I did not take it. After I got to bed that night, however, I told my grandmother about it. When asked why I had failed to bring home the beads, I replied: 'I was afraid you would tell me that I had taken them from someone.' My grandmother merely remarked: 'Well, you should have brought them to me, or better, you should have taken me to where they were lying.' But when I took her to the spot the next day the beads were gone."

[764] This reminded Coming Daylight of an incident in her own childhood. "I was walking near a grove of trees where several corpses had been placed (in the traditional manner of disposing of the dead). I noticed a considerable amount of bear excrement and mixed in it were a number of elk teeth—the most valuable

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183 other men so you will avoid your husband's suspicion," and so on.
861 Sometimes the appeal was made by a parent: "If you do such and such a thing well, I will be proud of you." In general it would seem that the positive side rather than the negative, was stressed.

777 It was more often the men informants who mentioned supernatural motives proposed for proper conduct. They remembered
867 that they were told that the Supreme Being would "have pity" on
888 them if they followed the proper code of behavior. Both men and women mentioned, however, that respect for the aged was instilled because "people didn't become old for nothing. They had a blessing from the Supreme Being to live long lives. Whenever you see old people attempting to do something and are having difficulties, you should go right in and do it for them. Help old people out and then ask them to intercede for you that you will have good health, a long life and success in all your undertakings."

867 The example of others was recognized as effective in child-
574 training. Al feels that the Gros Ventres were well brought up in the old days "because children were taught to stick to the rules and they had the good example of adults to follow." In describing the duty of hospitality, Coming Daylight said: "My grandmother was a great one to have a lot of visitors because she was generous, and so I got a good example at home." It was said by others of Coming Daylight: "She feeds everyone who comes along just as she used to see her uncle (mother's brother) do. She takes after her uncle in lots of ways."

In lecturing to the young, examples of actual behavior of persons, both good and bad, were often given. For instance, in warning boys of the evils of gambling, reference would be made to men who would otherwise have had promising careers buf who ruined their chances by too heavy stakes which they lost. Fear
[954] of offending those who had supernatural power lest they retaliate by means of black magic was implicit in at least some of the admonitions. This was so, for instance, in instructing young men to stay away from the wives of "powerful" men, as well as in warning girls to decline improper proposals "in a nice way."

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CHAPTER X

OLD AGE AND DEATH

It is the opinion of the now aged Gros Ventres that the proportion of old persons was much greater in the past than it has been since they have taken up the white man's ways; and further, that the aged then retained their health and vigor to a greater degree.[1] One old woman stated that when she was young, there used to be many old people, but that they died off when there were no more buffalo. She added: "People lived to a good old age on the things that the Supreme Being provided,—roots, wild vegetables and fruits, dried meats and berries. In those days, too, they drank broth instead of tea and coffee. Old folks didn't lose their teeth then, although even young girls do nowadays. Their teeth eventually got worn down, but they seldom pulled them. In fact, if an old person should lose a tooth, he thought it was awful and was sure that he was ready for the grave. Furthermore, people didn't get white hair until they were ready for 'old age sleep'—very old people sleep most of the time—yet now one sees middle-aged and even younger people with gray hair like the whites have."

Status and Treatment of the Aged

It was believed that a person who had lived to a ripe old age had been privileged to do so by the Supreme Being. Therefore, they reasoned, if you are good to old people, these in turn will pray to the Supreme Being for your health, long life, and success. Children were instructed explicitly to be good to the aged,—to feed them, to clothe them, and to help them in difficulties,—as well as to seek out those so blessed and ask for their prayers. It was

[1] Allowance should of course be made for the fact that "old age" is a relative term. When it was said that young men were urged to marry "older experienced women," this referred to a woman of perhaps twenty to twenty-five. See pp. 171–72. A woman on the northern plains was "old" at forty, according to Denig, p. 513.

thought well, too, to name a child after someone who had attained advanced age. Thus it was that youths of 16 or 17 years of age would go out in a storm and stand before the lodge of some old man or woman and cry, begging the prayers of that person. Again, on a hunting party, should there be some old man along, unable to hunt, one member of the group might give a whole buffalo carcass to him; whereupon the grateful elder would offer a spontaneous prayer on the donor's behalf. Similarly, it was not at all unusual for successful young hunters to seek out old people to share in some of the spoils,—just as in these later times a bottle of whiskey was occasionally given to old persons by the young. Once in a while, too, some married man would have his wife cook a quantity of food and publicly invite old people, one of whom, in appreciation of this attention, would offer the expected prayer for the long life, health and success of the host and all the members of his household.

Dignity was, however, not necessarily an attribute of old age. With advancing years the conventions were somewhat relaxed. It was stated by one informant: "When a man had lived long enough to have participated in all the Sacred Dances, he had acquired the right to do almost as he pleased, including not having to observe so strictly the relationship taboos. It seemed to throw the bars down and he could have even more fun than ever at the expense of his enemy-friends and become still more vulgar and obscene." Relations between old women living together were not always harmonious and noisy quarreling was not unusual. Sometimes young boys played pranks on such old women, as in the following case.

"Two old women who were sisters shared a lodge. One day they were in there, seated back to back, warming themselves by the fire. They didn't have any clothes on and were feeling good, scratching their skins with sticks. Two young boys peeped in. They took a long willow and quietly heated the end of it in the fire. When the end of the willow was glowing, they touched one of the old women with it. She yelled at the other: 'You burned me,' and of course the other denied it. After a little while, the boys did the same thing to the other old woman. They heard her call out: 'What did you do to me? You burned me!' The boys

2: Flannery E-5 (1940-1948) 1953
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repeated this stunt twice more, but this was too much for these old women, who then started fighting and shouting recriminations, blaming each other. The boys of course were in high glee as the old women hit each other and grunted. Finally, however, they called the daughter of one of the old women, saying: 'Come and see these old ones fighting. Try and stop them. They will kill each other.' So as the boys ran away, the younger woman restored peace."

Care of the aged devolved upon close kin. Whereas old men customarily lived directly with the households to which they were attached, old windows usually lived in lodges separate from, but located near, those of relatives who provided most of their food. To old women was often relegated the care of their grandchildren, especially of their granddaughters, whom they were supposed to train from the age of about seven until such time as they were given in marriage. The young girls in turn supplied the water and fuel for their grandmothers. In case the aged person had children of his own, he was reasonably secure. Those whose dependence was on more remote relatives were less assured of good care. The aged who had special skills which could be exercised in spite of debility, especially those who possessed "medicine power," were better off than the others.[8]

In dealing with old people it was said that much patience and forbearance were often necessary. For instance, one old woman, now deceased, was described by a relative in the following terms: "She was a hardboiled old jane, rough and tough, who didn't hesitate to tell you what she thought of things. But she had many friends and when visitors came she would swell up and be proud when they sat beside her rather than beside one of the several other old women who lived in the same place. Usually during the visit, however, she would get mad and threaten all kinds of things, and people would have to humor her. One day she really blew up and said: 'I'm going to save my relatives the job of hauling my carcass out, so I'm going out on the hills right now and lie out there and die!' So one of her relatives had to pretend to take her

[8] Denig, pp. 576–77, states that only such old persons who possess medicine powers are exempt from the petty tricks and other annoyances to which the aged in general are subject among northern plains tribes.

2: Flannery E-5 (1940-1948) 1953
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seriously and he grabbed her by the arm and yelled: 'Come back here! What are you going to do?' The old woman was taken by surprise,—her bluff was called,—and she meekly came back."

More than one Gros Ventre used the phrase regarding old women in general that they were "great ones to pout." An example of sulking on the part of one old woman, which resulted in more than ordinarily serious consequences, is the following told by Singer. "One time when I was young, the group was about to move camp. There was an old woman whose granddaughter was looking after her, but she was 'pouting' and refused to get on either the travois or the horse. When the party was leaving, her granddaughter urged her: 'Hurry. Everybody is leaving us and it is dangerous to travel alone!' But the old woman just pouted and pouted, and finally in desperation the girl left. When they camped again, the girl kept worrying about her grandmother, so she asked a man to go back with her. They were mounted. The rest of the party waited a long time, but when they didn't return, the whole group went back to hunt for them. They found that the girl and the man had been killed and scalped, but the old woman lay dead in a sweatlodge.

"Years later they heard the details from the Assiniboine, who had swooped down on the three of them just as the girl and her companion met the old woman who was slowly following the trail on foot. They first killed the man and tried to capture the girl. When she resisted, they killed her and scalped them both. They didn't harm the old woman, but she begged them to build a sweatlodge for her and leave her there. She told them: 'Seal it up tightly. I just as much as killed my grandchild, and I will die with her.'"

In the days when the Gros Ventres were nomadic, abandonment of the ill and aged was not unknown. Sometimes it was done with great regret, when the responsible parties did not have the equipment to enable them to carry the old person along. On other occasions the old person was quite callously left to his fate. Singer recalled the following instance. "On one occasion the group was moving camp, and one family went off and left an old helpless woman sitting there without so much as having prepared a shelter for her. My younger brother kept saying: 'You are leaving an old

2: Flannery E-5 (1940-1948) 1953
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woman! You are leaving an old woman!' Finally our mother couldn't stand it any longer and, although she was not responsible for that old woman, she turned back and got the old woman to camp by letting her hang onto the travois. But we didn't have to carry her because she died shortly after that."

Takes The Bow mentioned that in the dim past, rather than to go off and leave an aged relative, the Gros Ventres used to ask some outstanding warrior to kill this old person—a father, or mother, or grandparent. This was done in order to get those who were suffering "out of their misery." The relative who took this responsibility would authorize the killer to count coup on the one whom he killed and thus score another mark of distinction for his record.[8] Other Gros Ventres were of the opinion that this type of "mercy killing" was adopted from the Blackfoot and that it was rarely carried out by the Gros Ventres, although admittedly abandonment of the aged to starvation was sometimes forced upon them.

Death

The Gros Ventres valued life highly and prayed for long lives, but when a person knew he was about to die, it was said that he resigned himself and appreciated the efforts on the part of others to ease his last moments. There was a desire to die surrounded by one's family and friends who would see to it that the proper last steps were taken. In view of this, if a man were wounded in an encounter with the enemy, every effort would be made by his companions—even at great personal risk—to get him back to his family before he would die.

When all hope for life had been abandoned, the dying person was dressed in the best clothes available, his hair combed, and his face painted "as though he were going to a party." Frequently last minute instructions would be given by the dying concerning his preference as to method of final disposal. He might also include advice to his survivors, and make occasional bequests of

[8] It is interesting to note in this connection that Cocking, 1772, p. 112, writes of the Gros Ventres: "They torture all the aged of both sexes in a most shocking and deliberate manner." The context is not clear, however, and he may have been referring to treatment of prisoners of war.

3: Cooper E-5 (1938-1940) 1957
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He was the "master of life" as previously mentioned. Long life was the result of something more than conformity to "health rules," such as daily morning cold baths to harden the body.[9] "The Supreme Being allows people to live long. If he wanted, he cut off their lives." "When people die, it is the Supreme Being who cuts off their lives." "Very old people lived a long life because they were pitied by the Supreme Being." The Boy's father, Lame Bull, said that "a man lives, not his own life, but according to what is given him and wished by Ixtcibani:hahat. A man has what he has by the wish of the One Above."

The Gros Ventres understood by that that the aged had survived to old age not by accident, but by the permission and wish of the Supreme Being. It was common for young men to approach in tears a very old man or woman, offer a pipe, and request him or her to ask the Supreme Being to grant him long life, to make him a good warrior who would be immune to arrows or bullets when he was shot at.[10]

In grave illness the Supreme Being would be appealed to to spare the sick person's life. It was a common belief that the Supreme Being would not permit a large attacking force of enemies to slaughter a smaller number at home in its own camp. When a group of young Gros Ventre recruits was leaving for World War II, the Supreme Being was prayed to in an old song that he would watch over them and let them come back home unharmed; although there were some casualties among Gros Ventre soldiers in World War II, not one of the above particular group was even wounded.

The Supreme Being as the one who "owns everything" was the provider of food. He was not called "master of food," as was common among the northeastern Algonquians,[11] living closer than the Gros Ventres to a scarcity economy; food, it was felt, was "too little" a thing, and the title undignified. But all good things to eat, including "wild" food such as berries, fruits, roots and tubers, came from the Supreme Being and were given by him.

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[9] Cf. Flannery, 1953, p. 144.
[10] Cf. Flannery, 1953, pp. 195-96.
[11] Cooper, 1934, p. 71.

3: Cooper E-5 (1938-1940) 1957
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Supernatural power too, while gotten immediately from animals, mountains (mountain spirits), and other creatures, through fasting and sleeping out on the hills, came ultimately from the Supreme Being, as mentioned previously. A person going out on a power quest, would pray first to the Supreme Being to command or compel the lesser being to give the power being sought. Power to doctor and to achieve war success and even to acquire wealth thus in the last analysis came from the Supreme Being. So too did the (supernatural?) power inherent in earnest wishes or thought wishes.

The Supreme Being also imparted knowledge and warnings to human beings through dreams and through his messenger, the crow. The crow on account of his relationship to the Supreme Being was a sort of sacred bird.[12] To illustrate the point the Boy told the following incident in the life of his father, Lame Bull. "Lame Bull on one occasion was sitting out on a hill and no one could get him to come back to camp. So some of his family got one of Lame Bull's wives, The Boy's mother, to go out and tell Lame Bull to come home right away as the camp was moving. As Lame Bull saw her coming, a crow flew over to him and said, 'This person who is coming is going to tell you something that is not true. Don't pay any attention to her.' Then the crow flew away. When The Boy's mother came within hearing distance of Lame Bull, the latter said to her: 'Don't say what you are going to say. Turn back.' But she kept on coming and told him her message, for which she got a scolding from him."

In general the Supreme Being was, as regards his interest in human welfare, the reverse of an otiose deity. His interest was a most active one.

Equally active was his interest in man's moral and social behavior. He was pleased at such moral or social acts as respect and help to the aged and care of the orphans, and was offended by grave breaches of the moral or social order. He bestowed

[12] In 1948 The Boy explained: "The crow is not the kind you see around here now, but a raven,—a bird that is smaller and more streamlined than the crow. The crow here in the fields cry like they are wounded, but this other bird has a shrill but melodious call more like a human being." [R.F.]

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Two young men attendants were chosen, but there was no police force, according to The Boy who said none was needed in the case of these "harmless" and "venerable" old men dancers. In general, The Boy had the impression that people had not cared much what these old men did in their Dance and did not go to it much, for it had "no color to it, nothing lively about it."

The dance lodge,—a "very simple little hut" according to The Boy and Thick; a "big round camp" according to Coming Daylight, —was put up outside the camp circle, toward the south thereof. The dancers carried out their rites "sort of secretly." They could be heard singing and dancing inside their lodge, but they did not go around much in public view afterwards as the women did in their Dance. The rattles used to accompany the singing were sticks about a foot or foot-and-a-half long with big buffalo calf hoofs on one end, and were very noisy. The leader's stick was larger and its butt end was pounded on the ground to keep time.

Two of the Dance songs, numbers 67 and 68, were recorded as sung by The Boy. Number 68 was sung while the old men were dancing and contains their particular yell.

The other song, number 67, has the words meaning: "You first (or leading) (buffalo) bull, come in this direction (come streaming in)." This song was a "half-prayer." The singers while singing it were wishing as hard as they could, so there would be plenty of buffalo and thus the people would not have to go far to hunt successfully. The very first original buffalo procreated other buffalo and singers wanted him to lead the other buffalo, his progeny, to the Gros Ventres. The wish-thought or "half-prayer" was directed, however, according to The Boy, not to the first buffalo, but to the Supreme Being so that the latter would provide buffalo.

The primary purpose of the Dance was pretty clearly that of bringing success in buffalo hunting. After the dance was over, the camp would move to another site, and then the people "would always run into a lot of buffalo and have good hunting luck." "Even if there were no buffalo nearby when this Dance had been going on, in some mysterious way many buffalo would come and even run around in the camp." Right after the very last time the Dance was performed, the people ran into a great many buffalo.

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The Dance must have helped appreciably to enhance the status of the elderly participants, a little old to take active part in the actual hunting and game-food providing, and to have given them a feeling of still being economically useful members of the tribe. The same *mutatis mutandis* would be true of the old women in connection with their own Dance.

After the more or less secret rites inside the lodge of the Dance were over, the dancers ran a race. After the close of the dance, the camp moved.

The elderly men who as chief vowers or associates had gone once through the Dance had reached the end of the ritual trail and became members of the unorganized "retired old men," of equal rank in this respect with their ceremonial grandfathers. After the dance the grandfathers could not control their grandsons, as grandfathers could after other Dances. After going through this Dance, the dancer though entering in a sense the "inactive" ranks could still be called on to function as a ceremonial grandfather. He moreover was allowed very considerable freedom and latitude previously denied him. With his Punishers' Dance grandfather he contracted a relationship somewhat similar to the enemy-friend one. In general, while of course he was given no leave to commit grave crimes, he was allowed much freedom in talking or acting vulgarly or obscenely in public and in the presence of consanguineal or actual relatives toward whom respect and avoidance observances had been strictly required of him prior to his graduation into the class of "retired old men."[88]

He could, for instance, talk pretty freely with his own brother-in-law who was also a "retired old man" about matters concerning elimination and reproduction, and could indulge in a large degree of vulgarity and obscenity before a group which included even his own mother-in-law, and no one had the right to criticize him for this or protest against his behavior.

If, for example, he took off his breechcloth in the presence of a group that included such relatives, someone might say to him: "That's going too far." But the old man might answer: "I have sat on the sage brush. I have the right to do this."

[88] Cf. Flannery, 1953, p. 196.

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At big social or Grass Dances, the people used to be good to these "retired old men" and gave them good seats inside the hall or enclosure where the dance was held. At one such gathering, probably around 1905, a lot of these old men were present sitting in a semi-circle in front of the four chief men. One "retired old man," Fire Steel, Thomas Main's father-in-law and Lame Bull's brother-in-law, a witty old man who liked to talk, came late. Even though Lame Bull was present, Fire Steel said aloud, in a voice that could be heard by everyone: "What is the matter with you old men sitting there? You ought to sing songs of praise. Instead you are sitting there and playing 'it' so women can admire you. But your behinds are all pretty black now!" And everybody laughed. Fire Steel used to get to a dance late and in a tone loud enough for everyone present to hear used to expose these old men's past behavior,—things that they would not want said in public.

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Fly Dance

This dance was called no:bao'wə "fly lodge." The word no:bä is at present used for "house fly." Our informants were not sure if the word, as used for the dance itself, referred to flies or to mosquitoes.

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The dance was last performed about 1907. Our chief sources were The Boy, Thick and Coming Daylight; some stray data were gotten from Turn Toes, Charles Buckman, Thomas Main and Cora Chandler. Our information confirms Kroeber's description, and supplements it in only a few minor details.

No origin story was known to our informants, beyond the item that the dance "belongs to the flies [or mosquitoes]."

The Fly Dance, like other Sacred Dances, was held only in fulfillment of a vow, a vow usually made in less grave emergencies. In dignity the Fly Dance ranked lowest among the seven Sacred Dances carried out by men.

It was held in the summer, usually around the time when one of other Sacred Dances was being performed. Consequently there was no necessity of sending runners to assemble the people, as

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"The Crow knew the child was a Gros Ventre, so they took her along and caught up with the Gros Ventre camp. After they had eaten, they called all the Gros Ventres to listen. One of the Crow was standing there with the child. I was small then. I went and listened. Using the sign language he said: 'You folks were very mean to this child and her mother. The child was pitiful and somebody took pity on her. We picked her up and are going to keep her. We won't give her to you.'

"So this girl grew up with the Crow . . . she did not like the Gros Ventres and she took her mother's name . . . I do not know to this day why the mother was abandoned. She had no husband at the time they left her. The Gros Ventres," Coming Daylight added, "abandoned old people and babies."[11]

Proprietary Remedies

So far we have been dealing with preventive or curative measures of the "rational" order known to and freely used by anybody and everybody. We now come to those exclusively owned and used by particular individuals only. These proprietary remedies fall into two main classes,—although the dividing line was not always sharply drawn,—accordingly as they were owned and used by non-professionals with little or no supernatural power or by professional medicine men and women with well recognized supernatural power. Such proprietary remedies, as owned and used by non-professionals, seemed to have been looked upon as of either the "rational" or supernatural order. Those owned and used by professional doctors as, in the main, of the supernatural order. We shall now take up these two classes, first, proprietary remedies used by non-professionals.

Coming Daylight emphatically insisted that she was not a medicine woman, not a "holy" person. "Some people try to pray through me, they lay their hands on my head and pray for something, as if I were a 'holy' person. But I am not. I do not claim to be a medicine woman. I never go around doctoring others. I just keep

[11] For other cases of abandonment, see Flannery, 1953, pp. 76, 132, 189, 198-99.

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[511] praying and singing were done at other seasons of the year and how far as a more general custom by other fathers of families were points we did not clear up.

[264] Before eating food, at least in any more or less formal gathering, a portion of the food was offered up with prayer.

[224] Prayer rites and observances for good hunting were few and simple—as compared, for example, with the numerous and complicated ones practiced by the Algonquian-speaking tribes of the taiga. Abundance of food, which principally meant game food, was commonly prayed for. Two of the Sacred Dances, the Law Enforcers' and the Woman's, had as a purpose success in buffalo hunting. But beyond this, hunting entered little into ritual, and we may recall hunting was conspicuously absent from the power quest. We recorded no rites or observances whatever in connection with the gathering of berries, roots or other plant food.

[484] It was customary on crossing rivers to pray to the Last Child for protection, and to throw into the water offerings, especially shells and eagle-tail feathers, for the Last Child, or the water monster, or both, with some words such as, "I give you this." Sometimes, too, some prayer and offering would be made by a person going to swim, or on other occasions of water hazard.

During or just before severe thunderstorms, various prayer and other procedures were resorted to, many of them directed to Bha'a, the storm being.

Seeking indirectly or asking directly the prayers of the aged, especially for long life, took several different forms, and played an important role in Gros Ventre life, as we have explained elsewhere.

There were many different ways of seeking the prayers of the aged. We recorded the following, which may or may not exhaust the list: crying before a lodge, offering a pipe, promising a sweat-lodge, "holy boiling," providing a feast, doing favors of various kinds.

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● 888 "Holy boiling," to which we have not as yet referred, was an observance distinct both from the preceding ones and from feasting a group of aged people. It was intended primarily for some one person, man or woman, although others partook of the meal, and

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could be offered by women as well as men. The person doing the "holy boiling" would have in mind the attainment of success in life. To be chosen as the person for whom the "holy boiling" was done was looked upon as a "great compliment" by the old man or old woman—it was always a very old person—so chosen.

The Boy described one such holy boiling, done by a woman in fulfillment of a vow (men too could make such a vow). The following is a summary:

The vowing woman (the hostess) chose a particular old woman (the guest of honor) to do the praying for her at this holy boiling, and after cooking a lot of food notified the old woman of the choice and invited a number of women friends. No men participated. On arrival, all sat down,—with the chosen old woman in the place of honor and the others in their places, and with food placed before each. The old woman took some cooked dog, held it up, and prayed in four directions. Then she gave four little pieces to the hostess and told her: 'Bury these in four spots, north, east, south, and west, inside the lodge.' The hostess did so, and then prayed, mentioning the Last Child, and buried a bit of food where she was. Then the other women present, on being invited, prayed each a short prayer and buried a bit of food, pushing it under the dirt, and included the Last Child in the prayer. Then all ate.

Very like "holy boiling" was offering a feast to a *group* of old men and old women. (In "holy boiling" some one old man or woman was *the* guest of honor.) The custom is still observed among the Gros Ventres. "A young man," The Boy said, who had witnessed such feasts, "would tell his wife to cook a lot of choice things and then would invite a number of people to the feast, old men and old women. He would send the crier to shout out loud: 'So-and-So [the host] invites you, So-and-So [names of the invited guests]. Come to his lodge.' The people would understand: 'That fellow is inviting old people.' These very old people, some perhaps blind or with canes, would come and sit down, without any religious rite. They would realize what the host was doing, appreciate his inviting them and not looking down on them, and would say: 'This man is pitying us. He is giving us a good meal and smoke and treating us well. Let us pray for him.' . . . Then

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782 988 one of the old men would take a plate or cup of some choice food and hold it up (not praying with a pipe) and pray, before the food was distributed to the various guests, to the Supreme Being (but not mentioning the Last Child) for the young man host's entire family or household, . . . that there would be no sorrow or suffering in the family, that they would have long life, that the household would stand firm and tight, and that the children would be healthy and good and successful. Then the old man would set the plate of food down and food would be distributed to all the old people. . . . Some old person would then suggest: 'Let us all pray.' Then each, including the old man who had prayed, would take a little bit of food, hold it up to the Supreme Being . . . and all would pray audibly but in a low voice, so there was a sort of humming there, each using his or her own words . . . and each would wind up by mentioning the Last Child and pushing the bit of food in the earth. . . . All this praying by the old people was done spontaneously [not requested by the host] . . . and voluntarily . . . , but the young man would be disappointed if the old men and old women did not pray for him and his family. . . . If the old people prayed they always did so before they ate. After they ate would have been too late to pray."

Sacrifices

782 Sacrifice, in the more restricted sense of the term, may be defined as the giving or offering of some material possession, usually prized as of intrinsic or of symbolic worth, to a supernatural being or beings, the giving itself being signified by expropriation of the object through destruction, segregation, or other process. In a more inclusive sense, the offering may be of something non-material, such as privation or pain or self-torture voluntarily undergone. In this section on sacrifice we feel that we shall be closer to the Gros Ventre point of view if, under the caption sacrifice we include both offerings that come under either the restricted or the inclusive sense of the term. The Gros Ventres draw no sharp line between, offerings of, for instance, a blanket, a little finger, a minute bit of one's flesh, and some of the types of self-torture to be described. All are things offered to supernatural beings.

7: Flannery E-5 (1940, 1945) 1947
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The addition of the four "chiefs" of the Grass dance gave scope for public recognition of the middle-aged men of substance esteemed for their wisdom and judgment to whom office-holding proportionate for their dignity was otherwise denied. Although there was no longer opportunity for the ranks of warriors to swell, those who had in the past performed brave deeds could still gain status by being called upon to publicly recount them at the ceremonial eating of dog flesh and by being selected to handle the feathered bonnets.

As the younger men had no chance to show their prowess in warfare and hunting, there was a change of emphasis to recognition of superior singing and dancing ability as one of the roads to public approval. This latter was brought out clearly by our informants when explaining the qualifications of those sought for the various officers of the Grass dance as it was performed around the turn of the century.

They stated that much of the success of the performance of the Grass dance depended particularly on the singers of the dog ritual songs. The four singers who owned the ceremonial drumsticks were chosen for their good voices and from among the "lively men who liked to do things." The candidates [illegible] have to know the songs in advance because they could not be trained. Two noted teachers were The Boy and Joe Big Beaver. The Boy said he used to "campaign against himself" when it was time for a drumstick to be transferred because "he didn't want to get tied down. He enjoyed dancing and the singers never got a chance to participate." Our informants told us of two men who are remembered especially as being outstanding singers and drummers, Ed Rider and Breath. The latter was described as a top-ranking singer who, so far as they knew, had never been surpassed. They said: "It was something worth listening to when Breath started those Grass dance songs. He had a voice adapted to that kind of singing and his sense of rhythm was superb. He could hold a big crowd of people spellbound. He was a real genius. Many others tried to copy him and learn from him, but none ever succeeded in equalling him. Regardless of his fine voice no one